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Senate

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, You are our refuge. Give us the wisdom to live so we never dishonor Your Name. Provide our lawmakers with power and insight to accomplish Your will on Earth, as they look to You for help. Become for them their shade by day and defense by night. As they acknowledge that You alone are the source of their strength, surround them with the shield of Your favor and direct their steps.

And, Lord, comfort our hearts as we mourn the death of our beloved retired Senator Mike Enzi. Be especially close to his precious Diana and the rest of his family.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Todd Sunhwa Kim, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

Mr. WARNOCK. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNOCK). Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING MIKE ENZI

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I always consider it a privilege to open the U.S. Senate, be here for the pledge of allegiance, be here for the Chaplain's prayer. But I must admit this morning that I felt such a sense of sorrow that we were praying for my good friend Mike Enzi, whom I had the privilege to serve with during all the time he was in the U.S. Senate.

We used to spend time together. We would talk to each other on votes coming up. He was the old "old school." He always kept his word; he knew I would mine. We worked on many things.

I did remember, through the tears this morning as I heard the news, of one day when I was chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee and Senator Enzi came to me and he said: You know, I know you are Italian American—which I am on my mother's side—and I am Italian American. And I have this nominee. He is one of us. He is Italian American. Please push him through.

Well, the nominee backed by Senator Enzi was, of course, well qualified anyway. We put him on the agenda and passed him.

A few weeks later, he came up to me, and he said: I have got another nominee.

I said: How many Italian Americans do you have in Wyoming?

He said: Oh, this is one of us. He is Irish.

I said: Mike, what do you mean "he is Irish"? You are Italian.

He said: No, I am just like you, except in reverse.

He had an Italian father and an Irish mother. I had an Irish father and Italian mother.

So he said: He is one of us; you have got to get him through—of course, as only Mike could, in that gentle humor of his.

And we laughed. And, of course, he was well qualified, and we put the nominee through.

A couple of weeks later, he comes up to me on something else. I said: Do you have another nominee?

He said: No, but I am looking for a French Canadian, and now I am going to call your wife Marcelle and say: This is one of us. We have got to get him through.

But I tell that story only because it was typical of him. He would quietly meet with Senators on both sides of the aisle. We were different in our political philosophy, but he always worked at finding a way we could come together. And countless times he would bring Democrats and Republicans together. It was never done with any fanfare. He didn't seek publicity. He wasn't running to the press to say: Look what I did; look what I accomplished. But he had the thankfulness of all of us.

He and his wife Diana and Marcelle and I have spent so many times together, and you felt this was somebody you could be having a backyard barbecue with, somebody you could just be

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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sitting together and watching a sporting event with or anything else.

I don't know the full details of the tragic accident he had, but I can almost see Mike out on his bicycle, in his beautiful State, and enjoying the day. I do mourn his passage, not only as a friend but as somebody who represented what I feel the Senate has been and should be again. So I will yield the floor and only say I miss Mike Enzi.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING MIKE ENZI

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I thank my good friend, the senior Senator from the great State of Vermont.

I, too, feel so badly about Senator Enzi's unfortunate passing. We received the very sad news this morning that Mike Enzi had passed away from injuries sustained on a bicycle accident.

He was only 7 months into his retirement, after four terms in the Senate and decades—decades—of service to his home State of Wyoming.

We will remember him as we remembered him upon his departure from this Chamber, as a kind and gentle man, as a practical legislator, someone who sought common ground and was willing to leave strained disagreements for another day. He was forceful, he was principled, but he was also gentle, a rare and unusual combination and much needed in this body.

He lived by a simple creed, given to him by his mother, that adorned his office, and he shared it with his staff: Do what you think is right; do your best; and treat others the way they wish to be treated.

Upon his retirement, those were the values he asked the Senate to remember him by. At the news of his unexpected passing, those are the values we will carry on in his memory. I offer my condolences to his wife Diana and to former Senator Enzi's entire family.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. President, now on another matter, Senate business, as Senators continue to finalize the text of the bipartisan infrastructure agreement, the Senate will process several nominations to the executive branch. Today, we will confirm Todd Kim to serve as the Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Environment and Natural Resources Division of the Justice Department, and, tomorrow, the Senate will vote on two nominees to the National Labor Relations Board, who I know will defend the rights and help deal with the rights of working people, so much needed today when there has been such an assault on labor and on working people in America.

Now, the votes of these nominees will in no way interfere with my ability to reconsider the vote on the motion to proceed to a debate on infrastructure. We are making good progress on both

tracks: the bipartisan infrastructure and the budget resolution with reconciliation instructions. And, to reiterate, Senators should prepare to work through the weekend in order to finish the bipartisan infrastructure bill.

JANUARY 6 COMMISSION

Now, about January 6, this morning a special committee of the House of Representatives will convene for the first time to begin an inquiry into the events of January 6. It is important we do this. January 6 was one of the darkest episodes in the history of our democracy, the first time the Capitol was breached since the War of 1812.

In both the runup and aftermath, vicious lies about our elections fueled dangerous conspiracies and mob violence. We must establish a trusted account of what transpired on January 6, what and who caused it. Not just the people in the building, as bad as they were, but many others may have been involved, as well, and I am hopeful that this inquiry will get to the bottom of that. We have to do this to make sure that such an event is never repeated.

But let me say, Mr. President, we have traveled a very sorry road to get to this place. The special committee in the House was forced into existence because Senate Republicans and Leader MCCONNELL blocked the formation of an independent commission, appointed on a bipartisan basis, to report on the events of the 6th. We had modeled it on the bipartisan 9/11 Commission, but Leader MCCONNELL stood in the way.

How did we come to such a moment? Well, in the immediate aftermath of the attack on the Capitol, the House Republican leader said that President Trump "bears responsibility." The Republican leader warned of a "death spiral" for our democracy if election lies told by the losing side were to be believed. Republicans of all stripes, many in this Chamber, demanded accountability and answers.

But, in the last 6 months, all that courage and truth-telling has evaporated into smoke. All that courage and truth-telling has evaporated into smoke. What a shame for the Republican Party. The House Republican leader deputized Members of his own party to negotiate an independent commission with Democrats, and once they did, he stabbed them in the back and instructed his Members to vote against it.

Weeks later, the House Republicans fired the only member of their leadership team willing to call out President Trump's election lies. House Republicans are now likening January 6 to a peaceful protest and a "normal tourist visit."

Again, I would commend to people the New York Times video—40 minutes—that simply documents what happened. And it is appalling to see one of the Congress Members say this was like a normal, peaceful visit when you watch the violence that occurred before your very eyes.

Here in the Senate, the Republican minority mounted a partisan filibuster

to prevent this Chamber from even debating legislation to create an independent commission. Is that amazing? Every Democratic Member was appalled that they wouldn't even let a debate on whether to have a commission go forward.

Four months, that is how long it took for House and Senate Republican leadership, who denounced former President Trump in the aftermath of January 6, who said they held him practically and morally responsible—4 months was all it took for Republican leadership to back down, turn silent, and then thwart an independent investigation into the January 6 attack.

So, today, the House begins an important task under the only circumstances that congressional Republicans would allow. I have no doubt that House Republicans will engage in efforts to discredit even this: the work of a bipartisan panel of investigators. They will dredge up the same dreary talking points. They will call it a witch hunt. They will call Republicans who participate Pelosi Republicans. They will cheapen the public discourse even more than it has already been cheapened and do their level best to sow distrust about any account of what happened on January 6.

For what? Fear of Donald Trump? The belief that their political viability hinges on whitewashing an attempted coup? Who knows.

But let the record reflect that the House will proceed with this important investigation and it will be done by Members from both parties and that it will get at the truth.

STUDENT LOANS

Mr. President, now, on student loans, final matter: Right now, across the country, there are 45 million student loan borrowers who owe \$1.7 trillion in student loan debt. In good times, paying off tens of thousands, sometimes hundreds of thousands in debt can be a crushing endeavor, particularly to younger people ready to go out in the prime of life. But during this pandemic, as Americans lost jobs and incomes, it has become even harder to pay back those loans.

Fortunately, the Federal Government provided a lifeline for tens of millions of borrowers when they ordered a pause on most Federal student loan repayments last spring. Of the many steps the government has taken to respond to the COVID crisis, this has been one of the most effective.

Unfortunately, this pause will expire in a little over 2 months, even while many student borrowers are still piecing their lives back together after the pandemic. So later today, I will join Senator WARREN and my House colleagues to call on President Biden to extend the pause on student loan payments until next spring to give Americans more time to get back on their feet.

Along with Senator WARREN, I believe that the Biden administration should go even further and cancel up to